

Message Text

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ACTION AGR-08

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SUBJ: PUBLICITY ARS FG-3G-132-CONTINUED

REF: (A) CAIRO 11897 (B) CAIRO 11236 (C) STATE 219966

1. SEPTEMBER 8, 1976, EDITION "AL AKHBAR" CARRIED LETTER SIGNED BY FOUR MEMBERS OF TEACHING STAFF AT ALEXANDRIA UNIVERSITY REFUTING MINISTER ABUL ATTA'S CLAIM THAT MINISTRY WAS UNAWARE OF PROJECT DETAILS. LETTER NOTED THAT MINAG DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN RELATIONS, WAS FULLY AWARE OF PROJECT SINCE ALL CORRESPONDENCE WITH ARES AND PAYMENT CHECKS WENT THROUGH THAT OFFICE. THIS IS, OF COURSE, TRUE.

2. ON SEPTEMBER 9, FORMER MINISTER OSMAN BADRAN MET, AT OWN REQUEST, WITH SCIATT, AGATT AND ERROS DIRECTOR GORDON. BADRAN SAID THAT MATTERS WERE NOW SETTLE WITH MINISTRY AND IMPLIED THAT HIS POSITION WAS VINDICATED, WITHOUT SAYING EXACTLY HOW. HE WENT ON TO REQUEST THAT FULL ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL OVER PROJECT, INCLUDING AUTHORITY TO RECEIVE PAYMENTS DIRECTLY, BE GIVEN TO DEPARTMENT OF TIMBER TECHNOLOGY, ALEXANDRIA UNIVERSITY, IN ORDER TO SIMPLIFY ADMINISTRATION AND GET BEST RESULTS.

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DR. GORDON SUGGESTED BADRAN PUT REQUEST IN WRITING

AND PROMISED SYMPATHETIC ATTENTION. HE NOTED THAT ARS WAS FULLY SATISFIED WITH PROJECT AND PROGRESS AND HAD NO COMPLAINTS ON RECORD KEEPING REPORTS OR FUND DISBURSEMENTS. GORDON WOULD TOUCH BASE WITH MINAG AFTER RECEIPT OF LETTER. BADRAN TO GIVE LETTER TO GORDON SEPTEMBER 14.

3. BEYOND SAYING THAT HE ANTICIPATED NO TROUBLE WITH MINISTRY OVER TRANSFER, AND THAT HE THOUGHT HIS PROBLEMS THERE WERE NOW SETTLED. BADRAN WOULD NOT BE DRAWN OUT ON THE ISSUE. HE DID SAY THAT HE HAD, WHEN MINISTER, STOPPED CERTAIN ADMINISTRATIVE PAYMENTS. GORDON REMINDED HIM THAT UNIVERSITY OVERHEADS WERE OFTEN HIGHER THAN THE MINISTRY'S.

4. ON SEPTEMBER 10, UNDERSECRETARY EL ABD, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, REQUEST APPOINTMENT WITH SCIATT (SET FOR SEPTEMBER 18) TO DISCUSS MINISTRY PLANS TO SET UP A COMMITTEE WITHIN THE MINISTRY TO COORDINATE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH IN ORDER TO PREVENT DUPLICATION AND KEEP INDIVIDUAL PROFESSORS FROM CIRCUMVENTING UNIVERSITY AND MINISTRY AUTHORITY. SCIATT NOTED THAT ALL PL-480 GRANTS TO UNIVERSITIES WERE NOW SIGNED BY SENIOR OFFICIALS. EL ABD SAID COMMITTEE WAS TO BE MODELED AFTER ONE SAID TO EXIST IN MINISTRY OF HEALTH FOR COORDINATING MEDICAL RESEARCH.

5. COMMENT: PUBLICATION OF LETTER FROM BADRAN'S COLLEAGUES NOW PUTS ALL ESSENTIAL FACTS, INCLUDING ROLE OF MINAG ON RECORD. WHETHER MATTER DIES AWAY, AS MINISTRY DIRECTOR OF FOREIGN RELATIONS HASSAN ABDULLAH AND BADRAN BOTH SUGGEST, REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

6. IN VIEW OF PLANS FOR COMMITTEE AND PRESENT FLAP, BADRAN'S DESIRE TO GET COMPLETE PROCEDURAL CONTROL OF PROJECT BECOMES QUITE UNDERSTANDABLE. IT IS INDEED A FACT THAT UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS SOMETIMES ENCOUNTER PROBLEMS WITH MINISTRY PROCEDURES.
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EMBASSY SUPPORTS ARS EXERCISING RIGHT TO NEGOTIATE AND COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH PROJECTS AT UNIVERSITIES IF DESIRABLE; HOWEVER, IT COULD BE AWKWARD IF BADRAN'S REQUEST IS VIEWED AS A CHALLENGE BY MINAG.
MATTHEWS

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